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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination
Against Women

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES
UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION

Second periodic reports of States Parties

Supplement

RWANDA

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INTRODUCTION

This second report of Rwanda concerning the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women deals with the progress made and difficulties encountered by the Rwandese Government in implementing the Convention. It also contains replies to questions which remained outstanding during the consideration of the initial report of Rwanda in 1984.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the general guidelines drawn up for the format of the periodic reports on the Convention concerned.

PART ONE

(a) General social, economic, political and legal framework in which the Rwandese Government is tackling the question of the elimination of discrimination against women

The principles of equality and non-discrimination affirmed in the Convention are guaranteed by the Rwandese Constitution, the Labour Code and the Rwandese Civil Code.

Apart from the Constitution, the Labour Code and the Rwandese Civil Code, the Manifesto of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND) states that the Movement "... brings together and incorporates the vital forces of the Country, without exception, that is to say without discrimination on grounds of sex, religion, ethnic group, origin, occupation or social status ...".

The Manifesto also states that "the Movement upholds the emancipation of women, in line with respect for family ties; the development of their personalities must be strengthened by access to education and to professional, social, economic and political responsibilities".

In addition, the MRND Manifesto stipulates that "any activity aimed at preparing women for the full exercise of democratic freedoms shall be encouraged and supported. The emancipation of women will provide new forces to participate in the acceleration of national development".

Rwanda is also a Party to other international instruments advocating the elimination of all forms of discrimination, such as the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and the International Covenants on human rights.

(b) Legal and other measures adopted in implementation of the Convention

As pointed out in the initial report of Rwanda on the Convention (addendum to letter No. 3475/16.02.18/5/AP/01 of 30 September 1982, which I addressed to the Assistant Secretary-General for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs), the Rwandese Government, since ratifying the Convention in 1981, has not adopted further legal measures intended to implement the provisions of the Convention, since those measures had already been adopted before Rwanda became a Party to the Convention.

It should, however, be noted that the Convention has been translated into the Rwandese national language (Kinyarwanda) and that it has been widely distributed to all the préfecture and commune authorities, to all women's groups and to all girls' schools in Rwanda.

(c) Institutions or authorities responsible for ensuring adherence in practice to the principle of equality between men and women

As the initial report of Rwanda also stated, institutions, public prosecutors' offices (parquets), courts and tribunals are responsible for ensuring adherence to the principle of equality between men and women in our country.

(d) Methods used to promote and ensure the comprehensive development and progress of women in order to guarantee them the exercise and enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms in all fields on the basis of equality with men

The specific methods employed in order to promote women's rights in our country are the following:

(1) The census;

(2) Developing awareness;

(3) Surveys.

1. The census

The census makes it possible to evaluate the numbers of women in all sectors of activity with a view to improving their conditions of work and their representation in the various sectors.

The census carried out in Rwanda in 1978, for example, showed that Rwandese women were active in all productive sectors, but predominantly in the agricultural sector.

The following table gives a good idea of the situation.

Distribution of the working population according to sex and according to sector and branch of activity - Rwanda 1978

Sector	Branch of economic activity	Sex					
		Male		Female		Total	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Agricultural	Agriculture	1 129 303	87.5	1 342 540	97.9	2 471 843	93
Industrial	Mining industries	11 614	0.9	259	E a/	11 873	0.4
	Manufacturing industries	27 377	2.1	8 057	0.6	35 434	1.3
	Electricity, gas, water	1 300	0.1	219	E	1 519	E
	Building, public works	24 889	1.9	103	E	24 992	1
Tertiary	Trade, restaurants, hotels	22 181	1.7	3 692	0.3	25 873	1
	Transport, warehousing, communications	6 345	0.5	166	E	6 511	0.2
	Banking, insurance	1 714	0.1	256	E	1 970	E
	Community services	34 567	2.7	8 305	0.6	42 872	1.6
	Services to individuals	30 655	2.4	7 877	0.6	38 532	1.4
	Total	1 289 945	100	1 371 474	100	2 661 419	100

a/ E = negligible.

According to these figures, 97.9 per cent of the total female population of Rwanda is working in agriculture, as against 87.6 for men. The other sectors of the secondary and tertiary economy support only a minimal proportion of the population and particularly of the female population.

2. Developing awareness

In order to give greater encouragement to the participation of women in national development and their own development, the Rwandese authorities often organize seminars for women in order to develop awareness.

The recommendations which frequently emerge from these seminars relate, in particular, to the involvement of the participants in establishing co-operative associations, improving the planning of their day-to-day activities, combating illiteracy, promoting agricultural production and stock-rearing, fostering useful handicrafts and encouraging women to stand as candidates to elective political office.

3. Surveys

Surveys have been carried out in order to identify and solve, where possible, the problems which exist in certain fields and which hinder the development of Rwandese women. These surveys have shown that such problems include the following:

1. Illiteracy;

2. A low rate of school attendance;

3. Frequent pregnancies;

4. The general underdevelopment of the country.

1. Illiteracy

There is a continuing problem of illiteracy in Rwanda. Despite the untiring efforts of the Rwandese Government in the field of education, schools will not of themselves eradicate illiteracy, since a runaway population growth and severe poverty make provision for education impossible. In addition, not all children who begin school complete the cycle, due to dropouts.

Thus, 60.3 per cent of Rwandese over the age of seven are unable to read and write. This illiteracy affects women more than men, since 69.5 per cent of women, as against 50.5 per cent of men, are illiterate. This is one of the most crucial obstacles to the full participation of women in development.

2. A low rate of school attendance

Depite the efforts made by the Rwandese authorities to achieve more education for girls, it is currently recognized that the educational system reaches only a small proportion of women.

This gap is particularly wide at the levels which should help women to equip themselves to tackle the difficult road to progress, namely the secondary and higher levels. Even at the primary level, where an equal rate of school attendance between girls and boys has almost been achieved at the national level, the school attendance rate of girls in certain regions of the country remains much lower than that of boys.

This gap has repercussions particularly in the fields of employment and political and administrative responsibilities, as well as in private enterprise.

3. Frequent pregnancies

The Rwandese population strongly favours a high birth-rate. Numerous and frequent pregnancies not only affect a woman's health, but also limit her opportunities to engage in activities relating to her intellectual, cultural and mental development.

4. The general underdevelopment of the country

Apart from their individual development, women have to fulfil their roles as citizens, workers, mothers and spouses.

In the socio-economic context of Rwanda, where technology is almost rudimentary, it is an arduous task for women to reconcile all these tasks.

(e) Application of the Convention in the courts

The provisions of the Convention can be invoked before courts or administrative authorities and can be applied directly by them, since they are already reflected in the law, and particularly in the Constitution of the Rwandese Republic. Its widespread dissemination can only have strengthened this possibility.

PART TWO: SPECIFIC INFORMATION CONCERNING EACH PROVISION OF THE CONVENTION

Article 2

Legislative measures adopted by the Rwandese Government in order to eliminate discrimination against women

The legislative measures mentioned in the initial report of Rwanda on the Convention are still pertinent. As stated earlier, these measures were adopted before Rwanda ratified the Convention concerned. This was simply the result of progress regarding the status of women in Rwandese society, as can be seen from what follows.

Before our country gained its independence, the Rwandese people lived under a system of customary law. There were a few rare exceptions among the Rwandese who were governed by the written law of the colonizer. It was these Rwandese whose way of life resembled that of the Europeans and who, through a process of assimilation or "establishment of credentials", became subjects of the imported law.

Apart from these rare cases, Rwandese society was generally governed by customary law. That custom included certain aspects which were discriminatory towards women. Women were the victims of prejudices according to which they were naturally subordinate to men. The entire educational system prepared girls from an early age for their future role as wives who were subject to and faithful to their husbands, it being taken for granted that the man was the undisputed head of the family.

Women did not even have much to say in public. They were also excluded from political matters affecting the administration of the country. Custom likewise deprived them of the right of inheritance; they could only inherit in the absence of male heirs.

It should, however, be noted that, despite these aspects which were discriminatory against women, women have always been respected in Rwandese tradition, primarily as mothers and wives, with the result that their role was not minimized for all that. This has undoubtedly had a positive influence on the progress of the status of women in our country.

Thus, when the country gained its independence in 1962, Rwandese law entered a new period, and the country furnished itself with a new public law in line with the republican ideals of a newly independent people. The status of women was immediately improved in that the first Rwandese Constitution, adopted in 1962, already affirmed de jure equality between men and women.

However, the equality proclaimed by the Constitution was tempered by the fact that it also recognized the primacy of the man in the household by making him "the natural head of the family". Similarly, in terms of political rights, the 1962 Constitution included a limitation on women's exercise of the right of eligibility; a woman could not be a candidate for the Presidency of the Republic.

Since 1975, a number of initiatives aimed at achieving full de jure equality between men and women have been taken.

In terms of public law, the most important success to be noted was the elimination of all trace of the pre-eminence of men in the new Constitution adopted by referendum in 1978.

In addition to these constitutional measures, the Rwandese Government has adopted a programme of concrete action plans and special projects aimed at promoting equality between men and women in all sectors of economic, social and cultural life, particularly in connection with employment, education and health.

As regards civil law, the Rwandese Government has undertaken the revision of the provisions of its previous Civil Code, which was based on the old Napoleonic Code and enshrined such anti-feminist precepts as the legal incapacity of married women, deprivation of the right to inherit, and the supremacy of the husband's authority in determining the family domicile.

In order to eliminate such provisions from its Civil Code, a new Civil Code entitled the "Family Code" has been prepared, and its draft is currently under consideration.

Articles 3 and 4

Measures taken to ensure the full development and progress of women and to accelerate the establishment of de facto equality between men and women

In addition to the legislative measures provided in article 2 of the Convention, the Rwandese Government intends very shortly to introduce an organization of Rwandese women for development with the name Urunana rw'Abanyarwandakazi mu Majyambere (URAMA).

When it is established, this organization will be the framework for mobilizing women, first of all so that they can solve their own problems for themselves, and subsequently for ensuring their full development and their contribution to the country's development efforts.

In order to facilitate the establishment of URAMA, a Provisional Bureau of URAMA was set up within the Office of the President of MRND in August 1982. It is the Bureau's task to carry out a wide-ranging campaign to promote awareness among women regarding the objective of URAMA, to prepare initial draft statutes and to take care of all the preliminary activities involved in setting up the organization.

It should be noted that the preparations and publicity campaigns are by now at a very advanced stage. It only remains for the competent higher authorities to adopt the statutes of URAMA.

Article 5

Measures taken to eliminate prejudices and customary practices based on the idea of the inferiority of women to men, and measures taken to ensure the recognition of the joint responsibility of men and women in the upbringing of their children

It should be recalled that the Rwandese Constitution affirms the equality of men and women. It accords them the same political, economic, social and cultural rights. Similarly, the Manifesto of MRND upholds the principle of equality between men and women.

None the less, some inequalities can still be found in Rwandese society, mostly linked to the slow progress of certain aspects of custom. Women thus still encounter social prejudices to the effect that they are inherently inferior to men and that they are not sufficiently qualified to concern themselves with the country's affairs. These prejudices, however, are tending to disappear, thanks to the Government's policy on the protection and promotion of women's rights. The measures adopted in this connection will be discussed under article 7.

Regarding the measures taken to ensure the shared responsibility between parents in the upbringing of their children, the Rwandese Constitution states that parents have the right and the duty to bring up their children (article 24).

By failing to comply with the duty to bring up their children, parents incur sanctions under article 323 of the Rwandese Penal Code (attached to the initial report of Rwanda), which states that "Anyone who wilfully deprives of sustenance or care to the extent of undermining its health a child under the age of 14 years or a person unable for reasons of physical or mental health to provide for his own maintenance ... shall be liable to imprisonment for between one and five years and a fine not exceeding 20,000 Rwandese francs or to one or other of these penalties ...

"If the offender is the legitimate, natural or adoptive father or mother, or another ascendant, or any other person with authority over the child or the incapacitated person or having custody thereof, the imprisonment shall be increased to 10 years ...".

Article 6

Measures to suppress traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women

The suppression of the exploitation of women, whether of full age or minor, is the subject of a series of provisions in the Rwandese Penal Code, and specifically articles 363 to 376. These provisions state that offences committed in connection with traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women are liable to penalties of imprisonment and fines.

In addition, the Rwandese authorities have taken preventive and curative measures against traffic in women and the exploitation of prostitution by establishing workshops which are generally known as "centres of re-education and production" (CRPs). The aim of these workshops is to confine and re-educate vagrants and beggars. Persons who, in the course of confinement, show evidence of improved conduct are soon released.

Article 7

Measures taken to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country

In the political field, no legal text in Rwanda limits the rights of women. They may exercise the right to vote or to be elected under article 9 of the Constitution, which states that "All Rwandese citizens of full age who do not fall within any of the cases of exclusion provided for by law are electors under the conditions determined by law".

The law setting forth the conditions for voting states generally that electors are persons aged 18 years or more who hold Rwandese nationality and who, at the time when the electoral register is temporarily closed, are domiciled in the district in which the elections are held.

The right to vote is thus recognized and guaranteed for all citizens without discrimination as to sex.

Similarly, the Rwandese Government guarantees women, on an equal footing with men, the right to take part in decision-making and political life by entrusting them with posts of political responsibility. The following table illustrates the situation.

Representation of women in decision-making bodies
as of 1 January 1988

Body	Representatives		
	Female	Male	Total
Central Committee of the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND)	3	23	26
Deputies to the National Development Council (CND)	9	60	69
Préfecture Committee	7	113	120
Mayors	0	143	143
Commune councillors	6	1 483	1 489
Members of the Rural District Cells Committee	2 174	41 626	43 800
Total	2 199	43 449	45 648

In public administration, which is the main source of paid employment, the number of women is steadily increasing, and some women are beginning to appear in senior posts, as indicated in the tables below:

Distribution of establishment posts by sex
as of 8 May 1984

Rank	Women	Men	Total
Head of office	38	218	256
Head of division	4	152	156
Director	3	108	111
Director-general	0	46	46
Secretary-general	0	16	16
Prefect	0	10	10
Sub-prefect	2	60	62
Magistrate	2	697	699
Diplomat	2	61	63

Distribution of establishment posts by sex
as of 1 January 1988

Rank	Women	Men	Total
Head of office	38	214	252
Head of division	6	148	154
Director	8	129	137
Director-general	0	52	52
Secretary-general	0	28	28
Prefect	0	10	10
Sub-prefect	2	60	62
Magistrate	2	716	718
Diplomat	1	70	71

The above tables indicate that, despite the efforts of the Rwandese Government in connection with the promotion of women, their representation remains low in comparison to that of men. This situation, however, results from the delay in providing schools for women and the lack of diversity in the educational curriculum available to them.

In order to redress this imbalance, the Rwandese Government has taken measures which will be discussed under article 10 in this report.

Article 8

Participation of Rwandese women in the proceedings of international meetings. Representation of the Government by women at international level

In general, the inclusion of women in Rwandese delegations at international meetings is current practice, both with regard to meetings related to women's affairs and to meetings of a technical or political nature.

In the diplomatic service, Rwandese women are also represented, as is indicated in the tables above.

Article 9

Transmission, acquisition, change or retention of nationality

The conditions for transmission, retention, acquisition or change of Rwandese nationality, as established by the Law of 28 September 1963 (annexed to the initial report of Rwanda on the Convention) are still in force.

This Law states that the man is the sole donor of Rwandese nationality, and that women only transmit that nationality to their children if the father is unknown or stateless (article 3). Similarly, a Rwandese man who is married to a foreigner can transmit to her his nationality, but a Rwandese woman who marries a foreigner cannot do so (article 7).

However, a Rwandese woman who marries a foreigner does not lose her nationality unless she makes an express declaration of that intent before the marriage is solemnized. That declaration, however, is only valid if the woman can acquire the nationality of her husband (article 20).

Article 10

Measures taken to eliminate discrimination against women in order to guarantee them equal rights with men in the field of education

During the colonial period, Rwandese women were kept outside the school system, which was introduced in our country at the beginning of the twentieth century. They did not gain access to schools until the 1950s, by which time men had gained a lead of half a century.

The Rwandese authorities have therefore tried to overcome the earlier gap between the training of girls and boys by increasing the number of schools for girls. At the start of the United Nations Decade for Women, the gap had been narrowed, particularly at the level of primary education, thanks to the campaign to provide schools for girls.

Furthermore, since 1962, the year in which Rwanda achieved independence, primary education has been compulsory and free of charge for all children without discrimination as to sex. The principle of non-discrimination between the sexes has even been introduced in secondary and higher education.

The statistics below illustrate the situation at all levels of education.

Number of primary school pupils according to sex between 1973/1974 and 1986/1987

Years	Number			%	
	Boys and girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1973/74	397 752	219 388	178 364	55	45
1974/75	386 719	211 029	175 690	55	45
1975/76	401 521	216 707	184 814	54	46
1976/77	434 150	231 769	202 381	53	47
1977/78	463 442	252 926	210 516	55	45
1978/79	515 712	270 707	245 005	52	48
1979/80	607 480	317 810	289 670	52	48
1980/81	704 924	367 299	337 625	52	48
1981/82	743 067	385 923	357 144	52	48
1982/83	747 172	386 377	360 795	52	48
1983/84	761 955	392 921	369 034	52	48
1984/85	790 198	406 266	383 932	51	49
1985/86	836 877	427 795	409 082	51	49
1986/87	904 378	459 338	445 040	51	49

In the light of these figures, it should be pointed out that, between the school years 1973/1974 and 1986/1987, the percentage of girls in primary schools increased annually, so that parity between girls and boys has by now been virtually achieved at this level of education.

However, at secondary level, the situation is different.

Secondary education has been unable to keep pace with the expansion of primary education, and only around 9.2 per cent of all those completing primary school have access to secondary school.

In 1986/1987, for every 1,000 primary school pupils there were only 92 places available in secondary schools, of which 56 places were for boys and 36 for girls.

The imbalance between the number of male and female pupils at the secondary level is explained by the smaller number of schools for girls in comparison with those for boys. There are 26 schools for girls as against 43 for boys.

It should, however, be noted that these figures are valid only for public schools; the breakdown of statistics by sex in private schools is not available.

Number of secondary school pupils according to sex between 1973/1974 and 1986/1987

Years	Number			%	
	Boys and girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1973/74	10 535	6 960	3 575	66.1	33.9
1974/75	11 227	7 497	3 730	66.8	33.2
1975/76	12 046	8 068	3 978	67	33
1976/77	12 570	8 448	4 122	67.2	32.8
1977/78	13 208	8 902	4 306	67.4	32.6
1978/79	13 799	9 268	4 531	67.2	32.8
1979/80	12 168	8 107	4 061	66.6	33.4
1980/81	10 667	6 949	3 718	65.1	34.9
1981/82	12 505	8 027	4 478	64.2	35.8
1982/83	14 230	9 082	5 148	63.8	36.2
1983/84	14 651	9 654	4 997	65.9	34.1
1984/85	16 543	10 852	5 691	65.6	34.4
1985/86	18 133	11 898	6 235	65.6	34.4
1986/87	20 692	13 651	7 041	66	34

At the level of higher education, women are also under-represented. The figures below indicate trends in the number of students by faculty and by sex at the National University of Rwanda (UNR).

Distribution of students at tne National University of Rwanda by faculty and by sex between tne academic years 1981/1982 and 1986/1987

Faculties	Academic years/sex																							
	1981/82				1982/83				1983/84				1984/85				1985/86				1986/87			
	M	F	%F	T	M	F	%F	T	M	F	%F	T	M	F	%F	T	M	F	%F	T	M	F	%F	T
Agronomy	129	6	4.4	135	125	5	3.8	130	116	4	3.3	120	129	3	2.3	132	118	2	1.7	120	102	1	1	103
Law	61	13	17.6	74	97	17	14.9	114	105	23	17.9	128	99	18	15.4	117	122	21	14.7	143	107	42	28	149
Economics, social sciences and management	192	60	23.8	252	200	75	27.3	275	208	85	29	293	258	109	29.7	367	221	70	24	291	218	60	21.6	278
Applied science, building, electrical and mechanical engineering	53	0	0	53	70	0	0	70	65	0	0	65	81	0	0	81	95	0	0	95	79	0	0	79
Medicine	145	11	7	156	133	12	8.3	145	124	14	10.1	138	111	16	12.6	127	97	17	15	114	75	14	15.7	89
Pharmacy	21	5	19.2	26	34	8	19	42	0	0	0	0	14	6	30	20	13	5	27.7	18	28	4	12.5	32
Exact sciences	135	7	4.9	142	108	9	7.7	117	146	23	13.6	169	181	17	8.6	198	228	14	5.8	242	201	15	6.9	216
Education	82	8	8.9	90	89	16	15.2	105	107	30	21.9	137	132	43	24.6	175	135	52	27.8	187	118	55	31.8	173
Higher technical colleges	44	14	24.1	58	43	23	34.8	66	33	25	43.1	58	38	26	40.6	64	46	18	28	64	46	16	25.8	62
Humanities	206	19	8.4	225	191	22	10.3	213	197	26	11.6	223	252	36	12.5	288	253	38	13	291	221	46	17	267

M: Male
F: Female
T: Total

The table shows the girls' preferences regarding the fields of higher study. It is noteworthy that there are more of them in the faculty of humanities, closely followed by social sciences. At the same time, the low percentage of women in the faculty of agronomy is surprising in view of the fact that the agricultural sector occupies the majority of Rwandese women.

This imbalance is, however, due to the fact that the type of education girls receive at the secondary level puts greater emphasis on technical and vocational instruction than on the general education which leads to university studies.

As part of the Education Reform which was carried out at primary level in 1979, at secondary level in 1981, and in higher education in 1987, the Rwandese Government plans to increase the numbers of girls at all levels of education, and especially at the secondary and higher educational levels:

By introducing a day-school system which will be able to accept a greater number of pupils at the secondary level;

By establishing mixed schools in order to increase opportunities for girls to follow the same teaching programmes as boys;

By building more schools for girls; and

By diversifying the curricula for pupils of both sexes.

In addition to the measures taken to provide boys and girls with equal access to public education, training and vocational guidance, the Rwandese Government is endeavouring to encourage basic education for those who have not received primary instruction or who have not completed it.

Basic education includes, in particular, literacy programmes. These programmes cover all strata of the rural population, in which 69.5 per cent of women are illiterate and 50.5 per cent of men.

In the process of acquiring literacy, those concerned are also made aware of the problems of their environment and of ways in which these problems can be resolved.

The literacy programme also encourages the dissemination of directives on various development-related topics, such as health, hygiene, agriculture, stock rearing, nutrition, economics, civic responsibilities and family planning.

As regards family planning, the attention of women in particular is drawn to the fact that frequent pregnancies act as an obstacle to their development and diminish their contribution to activities aimed at encouraging their advancement.

With the assistance of the divisions of the National Population Office (ONAPO), a department which was established by the Government with the aim of solving problems related to population growth, women learn methods which can help them to space out births so that they can participate more effectively in both their own and the country's development.

Article 11

Measures taken to eliminate discrimination in the field of employment

The principle of equality in the field of employment is affirmed and guaranteed by the Rwandese Constitution and the Labour Code.

The Rwandese Constitution states that "everyone has the right to work, to free choice of work and to equitable and satisfactory conditions of work" (article 30).

In connection with the guarantees against discrimination in respect of acc to employment, article 25 of the Labour Code states that "any distinction or preference based on race, colour, sex, religion or social status which would ha the effect of destroying or impairing equality of employment opportunities is prohibited".

In order to ensure that women enjoy conditions of work equal to those of m and equal pay for equal work, article 82 of the Labour Code affirms the princip "for equal work, equal pay" for all, and specifically without distinction as to

In order to implement this provision, labour inspectors are responsible fo visiting enterprises in order to check the wage scales drawn up by these enterprises. In addition, they are responsible for examining workers' complain in cases of injustice regarding equal pay.

As far as the promotion of workers is concerned, Rwandese legislation on employment contains no provisions limiting the right of equal opportunity for m and women.

Thus, any worker who fulfils the required conditions is entitled to promot

In the case of civil servants, these conditions are set out in Presidentia Decree No. 69/03/2 of 19 March 1974 containing the service rules for staff of t central administration, and in the Decree-Law of 19 March 1974 which contains t general service rules for civil servants.

The above-mentioned Presidential Decree and Decree-Law specify that each y after they become permanent staff of the central administration, civil servants undergo an assessment, on the basis of which they are promoted.

For employees in the private sector, decrees of the Minister whose functio include responsibility for labour determine retirement pensions, which are calculated on the basis of 4 per cent of the gross salary per year of service.

With regard to continuing and vocational training, workers may, without discrimination as to sex, benefit from training courses and participate in semi or conferences organized either within Rwanda or abroad, in order to ensure tha they are able to keep pace with technological changes and job requirements at e stage of development.

Apart from the right to equal pay for equal work and the right to vocation training and promotion, women working in the wage-earning sector benefit from t social security system.

In Rwanda the social security system in general covers medical care, disability and old-age pensions, industrial accident benefits and benefits to survivors in the event of the decease of the worker.

Maternity benefits are not as yet covered by the social security system currently in force.

In connection with the right to health protection and safe conditions of w the Labour Code specifies that the enterprise must maintain a constant standard cleanliness so that the employees can work in the conditions of hygiene and saf necessary for their health. The employer must also make suitable facilities available to his staff.

To ensure that these conditions are complied with in places of work where working conditions are dangerous to the safety and health of the workers, the employer is required by the Labour Inspector to remedy those conditions (article 143 of the Labour Code).

These measures aimed at ensuring safety and hygiene at work apply to all workers covered by the labour legislation: they embrace all categories without distinction as to sector of employment.

In order to protect the health of women working in the wage-earning sector, the Minister whose functions include responsibility for labour determines the type of work and categories of enterprise which are prohibited for women and especially for pregnant women.

In order to safeguard the welfare of mothers, in addition to the statutory annual leave to which every employee is entitled, a mother working in the wage-earning sector benefits from special leave, generally of two months, following childbirth. On presentation of a medical certificate, she is entitled to rest during the afternoons for one month before she gives birth.

After childbirth, a woman is entitled to an hour's rest per day during working hours when she is nursing, until the infant reaches the age of one year.

In order to protect women against unfair dismissal on the grounds of maternity, the Labour Code stipulates that any pregnant woman whose condition has been medically certified may leave her employment without prior notice and without having to pay compensation for breach of contract. The same measure may be applied for a period of 15 months commencing with the birth of the child.

In the case in which a woman is absent from employment for a longer period because of an illness which is confirmed by a medical certificate as resulting from her pregnancy or childbirth and which makes it impossible for her to resume work, her employer may not give her notice before a period of six months has elapsed.

Article 12

Access of women to health-care services

In Rwanda, all citizens without distinction have the right to health-care services.

Specifically for women, within the framework of the programme for promoting the health of mothers and children, a preventive vaccination service against the most common infectious diseases, and particularly tetanus, tuberculosis and measles, has been launched by the Ministry of Public Health and Social Affairs.

It is recommended that women be vaccinated against tetanus every five years, but especially before and after childbirth.

Similarly, women are entitled to individual health-care services. In the case of pregnancy, they are entitled to three medical examinations by a gynaecologist free of charge. Two additional examinations may, however, be offered to the pregnant woman if the doctor considers it necessary.

In connection with family planning, women benefit from free contraceptives and receive advice on how to use them from the social welfare and health services.

Article 13

Right to family benefits, bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit, and the right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life

In Rwanda, a married woman is not considered as having persons in her charg and, accordingly, is not entitled to family benefits. This measure does not, therefore, concern widows and unmarried women.

Access to bank or other types of loan does not give rise to difficulties fo women, provided that they can offer security. However, the only major problem encountered by Rwandese women is in finding this security, since they are not in possession of property. For Rwandese women the lack of property is generally linked to deprivation of the right to inherit.

In order to give women greater access to bank loans, some women belonging t Rwanda's small female intelligentsia have recently established a non-profit association with the name DUTERIMBERE, which is affiliated to Women's World Bank (WWB).

DUTERIMBERE helps women to gain access to loans by helping them in preparin documents for loan applications and by providing them with security against loan from banking institutions. Apart from bank loan facilities, DUTERIMBERE's aims

To promote greater involvement of women in economic development by establishing a fund for income-generating activities for women;

To encourage the spirit of enterprise among Rwandese women;

To improve the socio-economic status of women in Rwanda.

In view of the importance of this association for the advancement and development of women, the Rwandese Government has endowed it with legal personal and is providing it with technical support and staff. The salaries of the personnel assigned to the DUTERIMBERE association continue to be drawn from the State budget.

Regarding measures taken to guarantee women the right to participate in all forms of our country's cultural life, the Rwandese Government is making opportunities available to anyone who is able and willing to use his or her intellectual capacities and thereby to enrich the population.

Accordingly, women, like men, can produce and publish cultural works and benefit from copyright.

Similarly, women enjoy the right to participate in sporting activities, and not even encounter difficulties in joining teams for games organized by men. Th sports in which Rwandese women are often involved are basketball, volley ball an athletics. In the case of athletics, the leading Rwandese athlete is in fact a woman.

Article 14

Status of rural women in Rwanda

In our country rural women make up the great majority of the female populat as a whole. They are mainly engaged in agriculture and domestic tasks, which ar often made more burdensome by the responsibilities arising from large numbers of children.

It should, however, be noted that they are not covered by social security, since the agricultural sector does not fall within the labour regulations.

The tasks in which rural women are engaged generally require them to work for 12 hours a day. This situation results from the lack of basic social and economic infrastructures and appropriate technology.

Within the framework of national development, integrated rural development projects aimed at promoting the welfare of the rural population have been specifically launched in recent years, with the primary objective of increasing rural production by means of agricultural and stock-rearing programmes so as to create surpluses which can generate income for the population.

Implementation of these development projects goes hand in hand with the setting up of necessary infrastructures, such as water supplies, health centres, nutrition centres, etc.

In the case of some development projects, emphasis has been placed on the creation of co-operative groups, including women's groups. The country now has 493 women's groups with 9,834 women participants. Of these groups, 63 per cent are agricultural, 18 per cent relate to handicrafts, 3 per cent are concerned with trade and mutual assistance, and the remainder are of various kinds.

Apart from these rural groups, women's groups have been established in each of the chief towns of the préfectures, the primary aim being to involve and mobilize women.

The existence of these groups encourages a spirit of mutual assistance and solidarity, and promotes the development of their members while helping them to earn income.

Apart from project programmes which promote, inter alia, the creation of women's groups, there are other national programmes to promote rural development.

These mainly concern the organizations for popular education, the most important of which are the Community Development and Continuing Education Centres (CCDFP), whose function is to act as a catalyst for development and outreach at the commune level.

At present, the country has a CCDFP in each commune, representing a total of 143 operational CCDFPs.

Since the CCDFPs were established in 1977, women have been the main beneficiaries of the programmes of these centres, particularly with regard to literacy, household skills, hygiene, agriculture and the entire range of welfare-related concepts in general.

Thanks to the dynamic policy of the Rwandese authorities, the country has embarked resolutely on the path of socio-economic progress, in particular by heightening the population's awareness, using the media, of the process of involving rural women fully in national development.

Article 15

Measures to ensure women's equality with men before the law. Legal capacity of Rwandese women

Equality before the law is one of the civil liberties guaranteed to all citizens by the Rwandese Constitution. It enshrines this equality in article 16, which states that "all citizens are equal before the law, without discrimination, and particularly as regards race, colour, origin, ethnic group, clan, sex, opinion, religion or social status".

With regard to the legal capacity of Rwandese women, the Rwandese Civil Code states that "a wife must obtain the authorization of her husband for all legal acts by which she enters into a transaction which she must perform in person" (article 122).

Similarly, a wife may not sue in a civil action, or acquire or transfer [property] or enter into undertakings without the authorization of her husband.

If the husband refuses to authorize his wife, a judge may give the authorization.

"The husband's authorization may be general, but he at all times retains the right to revoke it" (article 124).

However, article 125 of the Civil Code stipulates that: "The wife does not require the authorization of the husband:

(1) To sue her husband;

(2) To alienate in the event of death.

Nor is it required in the following cases:

(1) If the husband is under-aged, absent, judicially incompetent, under guardianship or placed in an institution for the insane;

(2) If the husband has been sentenced to a penalty of not less than six months' penal servitude, throughout the period of his sentence;

(3) If there has been a judicial separation of property between the spouses".

With regard to the provisions of the Civil Code mentioned above, it should be pointed out that legal incapacity affects only married women in our country. Widows and unmarried women possess full civil capacity.

In connection with the rights of free movement of persons, the Rwandese Constitution provides that "All citizens have the right of movement and the right freely to settle in the national territory and to leave it and return to it; the exercise of this right may only be restricted by law on the grounds of public order or State security" (article 21).

Article 16

Measures taken to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations

As regards marriage and all related questions, the Rwandese Civil Code places the spouses on a footing of equality.

In fact, both men and women are entitled to and guaranteed the right to enter into marriage and freely to choose a spouse. In the case of a marriage contract, the consent of both spouses is required. The impediments to marriage are likewise identical for the two spouses. Specifically, these impediments are the following:

Prohibition of marriage between legitimate or illegitimate ascendants and descendants in direct and collateral lines;

Prohibition of marriage between legitimate or illegitimate brothers and sisters;

Prohibition of marriage prior to the dissolution or annulment of the previous marriage.

During marriage, the spouses have a mutual obligation of fidelity, help and assistance.

In the event of the dissolution of the marriage through the death of one of the spouses, the estate of the spouse must provide sustenance to a surviving spouse who is in need at the time of the death.

If a marriage is dissolved on specific grounds, and if the spouse who has obtained the divorce has insufficient resources to provide for his or her subsistence, the court grants that spouse a subsistence allowance from the assets of the other spouse. Similarly, the children are assigned to the spouse who has obtained the divorce, unless the court, for the greater benefit of the children, orders that all or some of the children should be entrusted to the care of the other spouse or of a third person. Whoever the person to whom the children are entrusted, the father and mother retain respectively the right to supervise the maintenance and education of their children and are required to contribute thereto to the extent of their available financial resources. The dissolution of the marriage can in no case deprive the children of the benefits to which they are entitled by law or under the terms of the marriage contract of their father and mother.

In the event of divorce by mutual consent, the spouses intending to divorce are required to draw up a notarized instrument specifying to whom the children born of their marriage shall be entrusted, either during the proceedings or after the divorce has been granted.

Regarding the number and spacing of children, the spouses jointly take decisions and enjoy equal right to access to family planning information. National policy concerning the demographic problems confronting our country consists in alerting every Rwandese to the repercussions and consequences of the problem of imbalance between population growth and economic growth for the welfare of the population.

Concerning adoption, the Rwandese Civil Code gives men and women the same legal capacity and states in that connection that all persons over the age of 50 years who do not have either legitimate or illegitimate children or descendants, whether born or conceived, are entitled to adopt.

However, the President of the Republic may grant exemptions from the age requirement to persons who have attained their majority (article 221).

In choosing the family name, the married woman has the right to retain or to resume her maiden name. With the consent of her husband, she may even transmit her name to her child.

In respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, women enjoy the same rights as men, but only when the marriage has been contracted under the regulations for the separate administration of property.

Finally, with regard to the age at which marriage can be entered into, the Rwandese Civil Code provides that a man who has completed his eighteenth year and a woman who has completed her fifteenth year may enter into marriage (article 96). However, exemptions for serious reasons may be granted by a public authority appointed by the Government to legalize acts of marriage.

It should also be noted that, in order to enter into marriage, a child under the age of 21 must obtain the consent of the person exercising parental authority over him.